

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### RECOGNIZING AND HONORING SOLDIERS FIGHTING THE WAR WHO ARE NOT AMERICAN CITIZENS

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize soldiers who are fighting and dying in the war, but are not American Citizens and to enter into the record an article from the September 18, 2007, edition of the New York Times entitled, "Becoming an American Citizen, the Hardest Way" by Clyde Haberman.

Everyday there are men and women who are not yet American citizens fighting on the battle fields in Iraq and Afghanistan. Words alone are not enough to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to American and soon-to-be American soldiers, who made the ultimate sacrifice by putting their lives on the line everyday. Volunteering to serve in the armed forces is a brave and noble act and there are so many soldiers who do so in part due to the opportunity presented by the accelerated naturalization process available to those who enter military service. To date, there have been 103 posthumous grants of American citizenship to non-citizen war soldiers.

The sacrifice made by non-citizens who have and are currently enlisting in the armed services demonstrates the value of American citizenship. Their sacrifice and commitment is honorable and should never be forgotten. Our great country, despite some of the challenges we face, continues to be the place in the entire world where people from all over the world are inspired by democracy, justice, freedom of religion, peace, and an opportunity to pursue happiness. This explains the motivation for non-citizens to enlist in the military and put their lives on the line in hopes of achieving their American dream.

I'm grateful that I had an opportunity to assist with the granting of American citizenship to Corporal Alcántara of the United States Army, one of my constituents, who lost his life in Iraq. I grieve at the loss of the life of a young man with such a great promise and I again extend my heartfelt sympathy to his family and many friends in our community.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 18, 2007]

BECOMING AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, THE HARDEST WAY

(By Clyde Haberman)

On an August day when some Iraqi's home-made bomb tore through him, Cpl. Juan Mariel Alcántara became an American. He never got to appreciate the honor.

A little-discussed detail of this war is that some of those fighting in it as soldiers of the United States are not American citizens. Over all, about 21,000 noncitizens are serving in this country's armed forces, the Defense Department says.

Until death claimed him on Aug. 6, one of them was Corporal Alcántara of the United States Army.

He did not live long enough to acquire a richly textured biography. He was born in the Dominican Republic, reared in Washington Heights. He was 22 when the bomb—an improvised explosive device, in military-speak—ended his life and the lives of three fellow soldiers from the Second Infantry Division while they searched a house in Baquba, north of Baghdad.

At 22, Corporal Alcántara was old enough to have talked about going to college and maybe becoming a New York police officer, old enough to have a fiancée, old enough to have fathered a baby girl he never saw, Jaylani, 6 weeks old when he was killed. He was old enough, too, to have sought American citizenship.

Every year, thousands of noncitizen soldiers do that, through an accelerated naturalization process offered to those who put themselves in harm's way so that the rest of us can go about our lives untouched by war. And every year, some of those soldiers become citizens only after they have literally been wrapped in the flag.

No other war has produced anywhere near as many posthumous citizens as this one, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Corporal Alcántara is the latest, No. 103. He is the 12th from New York, an honor roll that reflects today's city: 10 men and 2 women born in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Myanmar and Nigeria.

The Americanization of Juan Alcántara came at his family's request. Representative Charles B. Rangel of Manhattan helped shepherd the application through the bureaucracy in a matter of days. Officially, the corporal was declared an American from the day he died.

There was a formal ceremony yesterday in the colonnaded Great Hall of City College of New York. Corporal Alcántara's relatives accepted his certificate of posthumous citizenship. They sat somberly in a front row: his mother, his two sisters and his fiancée, Sayonara Lopez, who fed Jaylani from a bottle.

Like scores of others filling the rows behind them, they carried small American flags. Yesterday was Citizenship Day across the country, a celebratory day for newly minted Americans. In the vaulted majesty of the Great Hall, used on occasion for such ceremonies, 242 people from 51 countries took the oath of citizenship. They were men and women like Lance Whitely, 32, formerly of Jamaica, now of the Bronx. "It's everybody's dream to become an American citizen," he said before the ceremony began.

The new citizens listened to speeches on America's grandeur and watched a large-screen video of President Bush offering congratulations.

Mr. Rangel, a critic of the Iraq war, left politics at the door. He spoke of a country that is hardly perfect but is ever working to make itself better. Once a combat soldier himself, part of the same Second Infantry Division during the Korean War, he talked about Corporal Alcántara's sacrifice and America's debt to him.

Throughout, the Alcántara family sat disconsolately. They applauded with the others and recited the Pledge of Allegiance and waved their little flags. But their hearts were elsewhere.

Maria Alcántara, the soldier's mother, is clearly a woman of stricken soul. She holds

Mr. Bush responsible for her son's death. Corporal Alcántara's Iraq duty was supposed to have ended on June 28, a day before his daughter was born. But his tour was extended as part of the president's troop "surge."

"If my son had been allowed to return, he would be alive," Ms. Alcántara said in Spanish, "and he"—meaning the president—"is guilty."

"My happiness, my everything, is gone," she said.

The mother, who is not an American citizen, also spoke of being grateful for her son's naturalization. Still, gratitude does not bring peace of mind, said one of her daughters, Fredelinda Peña. "It's not a happy moment," Ms. Peña said.

Unlike others on this day of celebration, the family wiped away tears. When the president's image appeared on the screen, Ms. Alcántara kept her head down. She could not bring herself to look at the man who she felt was the reason her son did not come home.

### TRIBUTE TO BRANDIS GRIFFITH

**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation to a very dedicated and hard working employee of the House Committee on Science and Technology. Her tenure on the Committee may have been brief, but Brandis Griffith deserves a big "thank you" for all of her hard work.

Brandis served as Deputy Communications Director for the Committee since Democrats assumed the Majority in Congress this January. She ably handled the Committee's website—both content and continued development—and assisted our press office with Member outreach and a wide range of other needs.

Working with our Committee was Brandis' first job on Capitol Hill, but her poise and flexibility in the position proved she was a fast learner and an eager participant in any task set before her.

She came to the Committee directly from a job with the University of Kansas. There, she spent six months developing her science writing skills as a research writer and media relations specialist in KU's Office of University Relations.

Prior to that, Brandis worked in broadcast journalism as a local television reporter. In her nearly five years as a reporter, Brandis worked for both KARK-TV in Little Rock, Arkansas and KFDX-TV in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Given our enthusiasm for Brandis' work while with the Committee, it may seem a bit strange that her stay was so brief. However, Brandis was offered an opportunity she simply

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

could not refuse—a return to her roots in television.

This week, Brandis began her new job as a special projects producer for WJLA-TV, ABC-7 right here in the metro DC area. There, she is responsible for developing and assisting in special reports on a variety of topics.

We wish Brandis all the best in this new and exciting venture. And we thank her for her dedicated service to our Committee.

#### NATIONWIDE GUN BUYBACK ACT

### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I was first encouraged to introduce the Nationwide Gun Buyback Act, NGBA, in 2003 after actions taken by the District of Columbia residents on Father's Day. On that day, citizens who had lost relatives and representatives of 20 advocacy and victim-support groups gathering at Freedom Plaza, a stone's throw from the White House, to declare a moratorium on murder for the Father's Day weekend. Not only did their moratorium have important symbolic value; in fact there was only one murder that weekend. Of primary importance was the fact that the moratorium was entirely citizen initiated. Residents themselves, around the country, must take responsibility for crime and not regard criminal activity as a matter for the police alone. In 2006 we had the fewest murders on record for the District of Columbia in 20 years, however, 2007 is on pace for an increase in the murder rate for the first time in 5 years, a trend reflected in many metropolitan cities, and nearly all of these killings were committed by handguns.

This bill would provide Federal funds to local jurisdictions to engage in gun buyback programs like the successful programs that have been conducted by the District of Columbia. Under the bill, funds would be distributed through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. After evaluation of proposals, added weight would be given to jurisdictions with the greatest incidence of gun violence. The NGBA would require that a jurisdiction certify that it is capable of destroying the guns within 30 days, that it can conduct the program safely, and that an amnesty appropriate for the jurisdiction will be offered. Not only individuals, but groups such as gangs and crews could take advantage of the buyback provisions to encourage them to disarm themselves.

This bill is necessary because, despite the extraordinary demonstrated success of the gun buyback program in the District, local jurisdictions have no readily available funds for similar programs. The District was forced to find money on an ad hoc basis and ran out of funds despite many residents who still desired to turn in guns. Initially, the District conducted a pilot program using funds from HUD. Confronted with long lines of residents, the Police Department then took the program citywide, using drug asset forfeiture funds. Even so, after using \$290,000, the city ran out of funds, but not out of guns that could have been collected. The guns were a "good buy," but hard-pressed jurisdictions, especially big cities, should not have to rob Peter to pay Paul when

it comes to public safety. The federal government can play a unique and non-controversial role in reducing gun violence by providing the small amount authorized by my bill, \$50 million, to encourage buybacks efforts where a local jurisdiction believes they can be helpful.

This bill is also a timely reminder as the District's handgun ban goes before the Supreme Court of the United States, the first time since 1939 that a Second Amendment case has been brought before the Supreme Court. Handguns and their impact on inner cities are indisputable. This legislation offers a common sense attempt to help local jurisdictions reduce killings. All jurisdictions, regardless of local views or laws, want to eliminate the special menace of illegal guns.

Importantly, the bill does not conflict with most stances on the controversial issue of gun control. The bill would simply allow people who desire to remove guns from their homes to do so without incurring criminal penalties for possession. Families, and especially mothers, have feared guns in their homes, but often do not know how to get rid of them. In most jurisdictions, a grandmother, petrified that there is a gun in the house for example, or her grandson, who may possess the illegal weapon, cannot turn it in without subjecting themselves to prosecution. This is reason enough for gun buyback efforts.

Like tax amnesty, gun amnesty, puts a premium on the ultimate goal. When the goal is taxes, the government puts a premium on getting payment for the amount owed. When the goal is guns, the premium is on getting deadly weapons off the streets and out of peoples' homes. This bill is entirely voluntary and does not compel anyone to give up her handgun, even one that is illegally held, it simply offers those who do not want guns in their homes an opportunity to safely dispose of them.

I encourage colleagues to support this very important legislation.

#### HONORING THE LOUISIANA HONORAIR VETERANS

### HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a very special group from south Louisiana.

On October 6, 2007, a group of 96 veterans and their guardians will fly to Washington with a very special program. Louisiana HonorAir is providing the opportunity for these veterans from my home State of Louisiana to visit Washington, DC, on a chartered flight free of charge. During their visit, they will visit Arlington National Cemetery and the World War II Memorial. For many, this will be their first and only opportunity to see these sights dedicated to the great service they have provided for our Nation.

Today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring these great Americans and thanking them for their unselfish service.

#### URGING SAMHSA TO QUICKLY MOVE FORWARD WITH REVI- SIONS TO THE FEDERAL DRUG- TESTING GUIDELINES

### HON. CHARLES W. DENT

OF PENNSYLVANIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I am fortunate to have located within my District a company by the name of OraSure Technologies. OraSure, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has been at the forefront in the development of diagnostic testing technologies. Specifically, it is the leader in the development of a protocol for the utilization of oral fluid samples in diagnostic testing.

Conducting drug testing on oral fluid samples, as opposed to blood, urine or hair submissions, represents a huge advancement in drug-testing technology. Drawing blood or collecting urine from a subject is invasive and time-consuming, as compared to utilizing an oral fluid sample, which can be obtained from a simple swab of the cheek. Moreover, oral fluid testing is both cost-effective and accurate. For these reasons, the use of this technology has increased. Nearly seven million oral fluid drug specimens have been successfully processed in the non-federally regulated workplace since the technology was first approved by the FDA in 2000.

Technological advancements in the testing of oral fluids for the presence of drugs have come none too soon. In a July 16, 2007 report released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, a tenant agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA indicated that illegal drug use is on the rise in the workplace. The survey found that nearly one in every 12 Americans had used illicit drugs in the 30 days prior to the survey. Overall this survey found that 8.2 percent of Americans are drug users, up from 7.7 percent in 1997. Much of the increase in drug use is occurring in our young people, a very real concern for America. In the 18–25 age group, SAMHSA found 19 percent had used drugs in the last month. Still concerning, the 26–34 age group had used drugs at a rate of 10.3 percent. This trend needs to be reversed. The development and availability of testing methods—such as OraSure's—that are accurate, cost-effective, and non-invasive gives employers a tool to set expectations and promote accountability.

SAMHSA recognizes the gravity of drug use in the workplace. Accordingly, it is now revising federal drug-testing guidelines to ensure that more companies and federal agencies have access to the latest advancements in drug testing technology including oral fluid-based testing. I encourage SAMHSA to move quickly with the revisions. Illegal drug use is not just a criminal justice issue; drug use has a negative effect on productivity in the workplace and drug users who labor in positions vital to the public safety constitute a potential threat to homeland security. I commend SAMHSA for taking steps to decrease drug use in our society and I urge quick adoption of revisions to the outdated federal drug-testing guidelines.

CONGRATULATING GEORGE A.  
CASTRO II

### HON. ALBIO SIREs

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. SIREs. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of George A. Castro II, a community leader and businessman, who is being recognized at the Hispanic Law Enforcement Association of Union County 2007 Annual Gala. His rags to riches story is an inspiration to anyone who believes in the American dream; his dedication to the betterment of his community is an example of how one citizen can empower hundreds of others in the State of New Jersey, while enriching Union County's artistic and cultural heritage.

Mr. Castro came to the United States from Colombia in 1985—as he says—with a quarter in his back pocket. After acquiring his real estate license, Mr. Castro worked at an ERA office, producing \$27 million in sales in 2 years. His successes led him to create his own real estate venture: Countywide Realty. Later, he decided to join a national agency, opening Century 21 Atlantic Realtors, Inc., which has become one of the top sellers in the country.

Aware that with success comes responsibility, George A. Castro II became very active in his community, volunteering in social activities. Mr. Castro became president of the Hispanic American Association for Political Awareness, which promotes Latino political empowerment, leading numerous voter registration efforts. Later, he created its Hispanic American Political Action Committee, becoming one of the most influential Hispanics in New Jersey politics.

George A. Castro II has been appointed to numerous commissions such as the board of governors and board of trustees of Union County College, the Sports and Expositions Authority, and the Consolidated Police and Firemen's Pension Fund, becoming vice chair of its State Investment Council. Currently, Mr. Castro serves as commissioner of the Elizabeth Zoning Board of Adjustment and as a member of the board of trustees of PROCEED.

In 1994, George purchased the historic Ritz Theater and Performing Arts Center, a veritable landmark of Elizabeth, New Jersey. The old Drake Opera House, as it was originally named when it was built in 1865, hosted luminaries such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin, Desi Arnaz, Bruce Springsteen, and Julio Iglesias. Mr. Castro has taken it upon himself to refurbish the 2,772-seat venue, making it possible for New Jersey residents to preserve an integral part of their cultural heritage for many years to come.

Please join me in congratulating George A. Castro II, as well as his lovely wife Leonor and his children George and Gabrielle for their contributions to Union County and for setting an example of the success that can be achieved in our great country.

CONGRATULATING CAMBRIDGE  
CITY, INDIANA AND REALLY  
COOL FOODS

### HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, new jobs are always really cool, but especially yesterday for Cambridge City, Indiana. Really Cool Foods, based in New York, announced that Cambridge City will be the home of their national production and distribution center.

I am especially pleased that Really Cool Foods will invest \$100 million in the complex with the possibility of creating more than 1,000 new jobs.

Madam Speaker, the integrity and work ethic of the people in the greater Richmond area are a perfect fit for Really Cool Foods and I heartily welcome the company to eastern Indiana. This new company will bring new opportunities to Hoosier families in Wayne County.

I would also like to congratulate Cambridge City, Wayne County officials, and Governor Mitch Daniels who worked so hard to bring Really Cool Foods to eastern Indiana. It is because of their efforts to create a positive environment for business and the quality of the Hoosiers in Wayne County that we are able to welcome such a well respected business to Cambridge City, Indiana.

### RECOGNIZING THE WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, this week the House passed a resolution commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its contribution to the appreciation and understanding of the United States Armed Forces. I am pleased to show my support as a cosponsor of this resolution.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow has been educating and entertaining men, women, and children for the last 23 years. With 50,000–100,000 visitors each day, the air show is rated as one of the top five events of its kind in the county.

This weekend Wings Over Houston will hold its 23rd annual air show at Ellington Field. Spectators will have the opportunity to tour dozens of military and civilian aircraft on display at the field, including trainer planes, fighter planes, and bombers used in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. In addition, during the two-day event decorated war-heroes, flying aces, and veterans will be on site inspiring the youth of our country with their war stories of bravery and heroism.

In my former life, as a Houston, Texas felony court judge, I ordered probationers to do litter patrol after the air show. Cleaning up the airfields and infield was part of their community service.

I believe in the sense of patriotism that Wings Over Houston creates for our communities. I believe in the way it honors our veterans who have served this country faithfully

and wish them the best this weekend as they celebrate 23 years of educating Americans on the history of the United States Armed Forces. And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP SAMUEL L.  
CARRUTH OF PORTSMOUTH, VIR-  
GINIA

### HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of a citizen of Portsmouth, Virginia, who has devoted his life to the work of God and helping his fellow man. Today I would like to pay tribute to Bishop Samuel L. Carruth of Holy Light Church of Deliverance in Portsmouth.

Bishop Carruth, the eleventh of thirteen children, aspired to be an FBI agent as a child before heeding the call to devote his life to preaching the Gospel. Bishop Carruth was educated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he attended Benjamin Franklin High School and Temple University. He then served for 2 years as a staff sergeant in the United States Army.

Following his discharge from the Army, Bishop Carruth was stricken with tuberculosis in both lungs and hospitalized in East Orange, New Jersey. The doctor's prognosis was grim and the young Carruth suffered much weight loss and pain. Bishop Carruth credits his devotion to God to his full recovery from this horrible disease.

Shortly after his bout with tuberculosis, Bishop Carruth heeded the call of ministry and co-founded the Deliverance Evangelistic Church in Philadelphia with the late Reverend Benjamin Smith. He served as assistant pastor in that ministry and in the field of evangelism faithfully for 6 years. During this time, he also received a doctorate of divinity at Jamison Bible University.

In 1967, Bishop Carruth and his family left Philadelphia and moved to Portsmouth where he became pastor of the Holy Light Church of Deliverance, which at the time had a humble membership of 13 people. Within 6 months under Bishop Carruth's leadership, Holy Light Church's membership ballooned and became an overflowing powerhouse of activity. With this growth, the original church quickly outgrew its capacity. In 1968, Holy Light moved to a larger building in Portsmouth and expanded again in 1995. Their current facility can seat 1,000 and includes plenty of space for offices and classrooms.

For 40 years, Bishop Carruth has been leading God's charge and serving his community at Holy Light Church of Deliverance. Bishop Carruth has been a member of the Portsmouth Community Development Corporation and has launched numerous community outreach programs including the Adopt-a-School program with Emily Spong Elementary School, the Holy Light College of Bible, the Summer Camp for Youth, the Men's Community Breakfast, the HLC Telephone Ministry, and reading and tutorial programs to help at risk students succeed in school.

Even as one of the most active pastors in the Hampton Roads area, Bishop Carruth has still managed to have time for his lovely family. He and his wife of 53 years, Mary C.

Carruth, have four daughters—Linda, Fayette, Dorene, and Sharron—two sons-in-law, seven grandchildren, and a niece and nephew-in-law.

#### HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMUNITY OF STRATFORD

##### HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Community of Stratford on the celebration of their 100th anniversary.

In the late 1800's, the community of Stratford began taking the role of a trading post as an integral part of the booming mining industry that transformed communities across the country. Rich in vast fertile farmland, the production of cotton, hay, and grains soon became bountiful thus overtaking trade as the predominant industry in the region. A few years later, Stratford became home to a large dairy concentration as well as a diverse group of citizens. The ethnic groups of Stratford included Portuguese, English, Italian, and others from all over the world that settled in this charming community.

A glorious day occurred on October 7th, 1907, when Stratford was founded by the Empire Land Company as a development property. The history of this place further demonstrates that it is only by embracing the importance of cooperation and vision that thriving communities are born. I am honored to stand and shine a spotlight on the community of Stratford as they celebrate a century of pride and progress.

#### IN HONOR OF THE CENTER FOR AGROECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

##### HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the most prominent centers of agricultural research and education in the world on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, CASFS, located on the campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, enjoys a reputation as the Harvard of organic farming.

While this reputation is well deserved, it did not come easily to the UCSC Farm, as CASFS is more commonly known. The program began life in 1967 as an obscure 4-acre organic garden tucked away in a disused and unnoticed corner of the UCSC campus. It was birthed by master gardener Alan Chadwick who inspired a group of students to convert a dry hillside into a magnificent terraced garden that incorporated the latest techniques in chemical free horticulture and reflected the back to the land Zeitgeist of the day. In 1972, the project expanded onto another unused campus site where garden participants began a 17 acre, later 25 acre, experimental organic farm. There they set out explore ways of improving and applying organic farming tech-

niques. Throughout the 1970s, the little UCSC Farm community quietly grew with a mixture of a little campus support, some creative grant writing, and the sales of its farm produce. A steady stream of student apprentices advanced through constantly evolving program. By the 1980s, the UCSC Farm had come to a crossroads. Could it reach beyond the little world of the UCSC campus and help shape the broader world of agriculture?

While the UCSC campus family welcomed the project, the broader UC system didn't know what to do with it. It didn't have any formal accreditation and it was not located on one of the UC land grant institutions where agriculture was supposed to happen. It simply lacked the necessary pedigree to secure an official and funded place within the University of California system. As the State assembly member representing the Monterey Bay Area during the 1980s, I had the honor of securing a line for the UCSC farm in the State's higher education budget. In 1990, I authored the California Organic Standards Act, which was largely shaped by work at the UCSC Farm and the Santa Cruz community of organic growers that had grown up in its neighborhood.

Since entering Congress, I have worked hard to share the story of the UCSC Farm's important work with my colleagues. Congress has responded with a total of over \$3 million in direct appropriations to the UCSC Farm since 2000 to assist with its important research and extension work with the rapidly expanding organic farming sector. Indeed, the UCSC Farm's influence has been far reaching, inspiring many sustainable agriculture programs at other universities, including UC Davis, Cal Poly, and USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pass on the congratulations of the House to all the people who have worked so hard over the course of the past 40 years to make the UCSC Farm such a great success.

#### HONORING DONNA AND STEVE HILL

##### HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Donna and Steve Hill. The Hills originally came to the Baltimore County Department of Social Services interested in adopting one child, a boy. They had three daughters and were very much interested in adding a son to their family. The agency placed a young boy in their home who lacked impulse control and required a great deal of time, attention, and therapy. They were presented with many more challenges than they had expected. Several months later, the agency learned that a sibling of this child was also in foster care in Baltimore City, in a therapeutic foster home. When approached about taking this second child, a girl, the Hills again stepped up to the plate. In an effort to keep the siblings together, they agreed to be parents for this special-needs little girl as well.

When the sister was placed with the Hills, she had to share a room with the Hills' youngest daughter. After a short period of time, it

was evident that the two girls, being so close in age, were in constant rivalry due to a lack of their own space. As a result, the Hills decided to put an addition on their home to ensure that the siblings could continue to live together. Though the two children were biological siblings, they had never lived together since entering foster care and had not formed any significant attachment to each other.

The foster son was struggling with multiple emotional challenges, and the Hills pursued intensive individual and family therapy to stabilize both children. The Hills officially adopted their 10-year-old daughter on March 23, 2007. They are still working toward adopting their foster son, who has expressed some reluctance because of ties to his biological father. This family has consistently put the needs of the children first. They have dealt with many difficult situations, while at the same time providing a stable, loving home environment for the children in their care. In addition, if this family had not gone above and beyond their original request to adopt one boy, these two siblings would not have had the opportunity to live together.

Madam Speaker, today I ask that you join with me in honoring Donna and Steve Hill for being unsung adoption heroes and I am honored to recognize them in the Angel in Adoption program.

#### WHERE IS SPUTNIK WHEN WE NEED IT?

##### HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, 50 years ago today, the Soviet Union changed the world by launching Sputnik I into orbit. People who were alive in 1957 vividly remember Sputnik. It shocked the American public and dwarfed the achievements of our rocket program. It was so serious that President Dwight Eisenhower had to go on national television to apologize for our failure, and promised a boost to our science efforts. This led to an awakening of innovation, which resulted in the United States launching a comparable satellite of its own, the Explorer I, into orbit fewer than four months later. More importantly, Sputnik spurred U.S. investment in aerospace, culminating in the Apollo Moon landing. There was also a great emphasis on improving our math and science education programs. This sparked an intense focus on equipping our workforce with the skills needed to compete with the Russians.

Unfortunately, once again the United States is falling behind other nations. This time, it is our children who are falling behind their peers in European and Asian countries that have more rigorous math and science education programs. We must do a better job of preparing our kids for the jobs of the future.

Already, economic pressures have pushed some States and the Federal Government to improve math and science education. For example, in Michigan the business community supported the effort to require that high school graduates take at least 4 years of math and 3 years of science courses. Michigan desperately needs a workforce equipped with math and science skills to attract employers to

our State and to retain our current jobs. Also, I should mention that President Bush recently signed into law the America COMPETES Act of 2007, which includes provisions to encourage innovation in manufacturing and to strengthen many of our Federal research and education programs. While these efforts are crucial to our Nation's future, we must do more to improve.

We should not wait for another Sputnik-like spark to bolster our Nation's math and science education programs. Fortunately, this year we have the perfect opportunity to invigorate our education system by improving upon the successful No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This law has helped countless students in the United States improve over the past 5 years, and it is a great launching pad for developing an educational system that will prepare our Nation for the future.

NCLB has helped shine a bright light on schools that need improvement, and has focused our Nation's attention on accountability. The result is a tangible impact on the level of proficiency in schools. NCLB has helped our children learn to read and understand math, and has closed the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their more privileged peers.

Yet NCLB still needs additional improvements. I introduced a bill to put science on a par with reading and math. The Science Accountability Act requires that science testing, which begins this school year, be included in States' student evaluation systems starting next school year. Another bill I introduced, the Improving Mathematics and Science Teacher Quality Act, provides dedicated funding for teacher in-service or professional development training.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that States are treated equitably. Our Nation's mix of 50 different State educational standards and State tests distracts from our national focus on preparing our kids for their future. In that spirit, I worked with Senator CHRIS DODD (D-CT) to introduce the Standards to Provide Educational Achievement for Kids (SPEAK) Act, which creates rigorous, voluntary education content standards for math and science. In exchange for voluntarily adopting these math and science standards, it provides States regulatory flexibility. It is worth noting that since education is primarily a State and local responsibility the bill specifically avoids creating national curricula or tests.

We must seize this Sputnik-like opportunity and strengthen NCLB. After the Russians beat us to space, our Nation redoubled its efforts and improved its focus on space programs and developed an innovative workforce. This led to many scientific discoveries and helped us put humans on the Moon. In the same way, we must redouble our efforts as we build on the successes of the first version of NCLB to help launch our students and our great Nation into the 22nd century and beyond.

## HONORING ENGINE CO. 112 OF THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT AND 100 YEARS OF DEDICATED COMMUNITY SERVICE

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished service and history of Engine Company No. 112 of the Chicago Fire Department. October marks Engine Co. 112's 100th anniversary. Over the past century, the men and women of Engine Company No. 112 have selflessly served their community.

The local firehouse is an important, traditional and valuable resource in the neighborhood. The members of Engine Company No. 112 strive for perfection in service of their community.

Engine Company No. 112 serves my neighborhood and I have had the opportunity to spend time there on a number of occasions; these men and women personify honor, courage, and the virtues of the Maltese Cross.

On October 31, 1907, Engine Company No. 112 was organized under the direction of its first captain, Henry C. Schroeder. Over the years, the firehouse evolved and expanded. Today, under the direction of Captain John M. Byrne, Engine Company No. 112 includes: Tower Ladder 21, Ambulance 80, the Field Officers of 452, and Communications Van 272.

Engine Company No. 112 has endured the tragic loss of three of its own in service to the community. William Butler, William Huerta and Lawrence Kelly all made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty and in service to Engine Company No. 112.

Engine Company No. 112's 100th anniversary celebration will occur October 6, 2007 at Company Quarters, 3801 North Damen. This will be a wonderful event memorializing this important anniversary.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the North Side of Chicago and Fifth Congressional District community, I wish to recognize the past and current firefighters of Engine Company No. 112 for their dedication and commitment to service. Moreover I wish all the best for the future firefighters of Engine Company 112 and their families.

## INTRODUCTION OF FEE DISCLOSURE BILL

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Defined Contribution Plan Fee Transparency Act of 2007. That may be a long title, but the details are actually very simple.

Earlier this summer, AARP conducted a survey of 401(k) participants to find out what they knew about the fees paid by their plans. Plan fees can make a huge difference in your account balance. As the Department of Labor has pointed out in a helpful guide on the issue, "Fees and expenses paid by your plan may substantially reduce the growth in your

account." Literally, it pays to know what these expenses are. What the AARP found in their survey is instructive: 83 percent of participants acknowledged they do not know how much they pay in fees or expenses. Already, the House Education and Labor Committee has held several hearings to highlight this issue, and I commend the Committee Chairman, Mr. Miller, for his leadership.

The growth in defined contribution plans offers great opportunities for workers, with alternatives and options they did not have before. Many workers, however, are simply overwhelmed with the information distributed and, because of that, may not be able to utilize these opportunities. Certainly, more disclosure is preferred. But, as AARP found out, the need to better understand this information means it must be in an easily digestible format and in plain English.

My legislation provides for disclosure both to the worker and to the employer. Participants, or workers, would get both an enrollment notice up-front and an annual notice updating them on their account. At enrollment, the bill requires that for each of the plan's investment alternatives, the employer would have to disclose the alternative's objective and investment manager, its risk and return characteristics and its historic rates of return. In addition, the employer must indicate whether the alternative is passively managed, as with an index fund, or actively managed and whether or not the alternative is a single-alternative investment solution, such as a lifecycle or target retirement date fund.

Regarding fees, the bill requires employers to disclose the asset-based fees for each investment alternative, whether such fees pay for services beyond investment management, such as plan administration, and whether there are additional charges for buying or selling the particular alternative, such as redemption fees. In addition, participants must be provided with information about any separate fees they will be charged for plan administration as well as a notice that certain plan services they may decide to use could have separate charges associated with them, such as investment advice programs, brokerage windows, or plan loans. Accompanying these disclosures would be a statement that participants should not select investments based solely on fees but based on careful consideration of a range of factors including the alternatives' risk level, returns and investment objectives.

In addition to this enrollment notice, each year, participants would receive information about the investments they had selected and the fees applicable to their accounts. This annual notice would describe which investment alternatives the individual participant was invested in, what percentage of the participant's total account each alternative represented, the risk and return characteristics of each such alternative, whether such alternatives were passively or actively managed and the historical returns for each such alternative. The statement would also summarize for participants what asset classes their account is invested in, with percentage breakdowns. On fees, the annual notice must describe asset-based and any sales charges for the alternatives the participant has selected, any separate charges for plan administration and any deductions for participant-initiated services. In addition, to assist employees who may want to make investment changes, the notice must tell participants

how to access investment characteristic and fee information for alternatives in which they are not invested.

My bill also requires service providers to disclose to employers various fee and expense information in advance of a contract. This will ensure that employers have the information they need to bargain effectively with plan service providers and to keep costs at reasonable levels for participants.

Providers must give the employer an estimate of total fees and a detailed and itemized list of all the services to be provided under the contract. Providers that offer multiple bundled services must separate the fees charged under the contract into fees for investment management, fees for administration and recordkeeping and fees paid to intermediaries or other third-parties. Providers must also disclose whether they expect to receive payments from third-parties in connection with providing services to the plan, also referred to as revenue-sharing, and if so, must name those parties and the amount expected to be received from each. This revenue-sharing information is critical so that employers understand how their providers are being paid and whether any such financial relationships give rise to potential conflicts of interest. Plan service providers must also provide this detailed disclosure statement to employers every year the contract is in place and following any material modification of the contract. In addition, employers must make such statements available to plan participants via web posting and upon written request so that those employees who want to delve into the details of the plan's financing can do so.

The Department of Labor's guide on 401(k) fees states that fees and expenses generally fall into three categories: plan administration, investment, and individual services fees. By requiring all service providers, whether they just provide recordkeeping or if they perform it all, to disclose fees in broad categories, such as these, companies and employees can better evaluate what they are getting for what price they pay. It is my understanding that some service providers are already disclosing more than what is required. I hope that we can capture those "best practices" and implement them across the board so that all workers and employers have the best data available.

Additionally, my bill would apply not only to 401(k) plans, but to all tax-preferred, participant-directed defined contribution plans, including 403(b) plans and governmental 457(b) plans. These amendments are all within the Internal Revenue Code, and therefore, penalties for not complying will be taxes assessed per violation per day, subject to a cap. I hope to work with the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. RANGEL, to address this issue within the Committee very soon as I know he shares my concern that the taxpayers' interests be protected.

Despite the news that 8 in 10 participants do not know what fees are charged, there is some good news out there too. One recent study from the Investment Company Institute, or ICI, found that the asset-weighted expense ratios for stock mutual funds in 401(k) plans fell last year over the prior year. This may be in response to another finding from ICI—that more workers are considering fees over the investment's track record.

It is my hope that this bill will provide much more information about plan fees and ex-

penses in a useful way without overwhelming recipients. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

#### INTRODUCTION OF SERVICE-MEMBER STUDENT LOW INTEREST RELIEF ACT

**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Servicemember Student Loan Interest Relief Act—a bill to ease the financial burden on our men and women in uniform.

When servicemembers of the Armed Forces are deployed overseas, the last thing they want to worry about is how they will be able to afford their student loan payments when they get back. But that is the reality for thousands of our Nation's servicemembers today.

Although current law grants servicemembers a deferment on paying back their student loans while they are on active duty, the interest on these loans still keeps accruing during their service. When our men and women in uniform return from months and sometimes years of service, many of them come home to student loan debt that has ballooned during their absence and that they will have to struggle to pay back.

The Servicemember Student Loan Interest Relief Act stops student loan interest from accruing as long as a servicemember is on active duty, up to maximum of 5 years. This bill will apply to active duty servicemembers of any branch of the military, including reserve units and the National Guard.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the legislation I am introducing today will save the average servicemember between \$1,183 and \$1,479 over the course of a 12–15 month activation period, with even more savings realizable for those activated for longer periods.

Military service requires those who serve our country to make tremendous sacrifices—personally, professionally, and financially. Let us give our brave men and women the peace of mind of knowing that after defending us on the front lines, they will not return home to bill collectors and creditors breaking down their doors.

Help me serve our Nation's bravest while they are off serving us. Support the Servicemember Student Loan Interest Rate Relief Act.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. HEATHER WILSON**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, last week on Thursday, September 27, 2007, I was absent for rollcall votes 922 and 923. Had I been present to vote, I would have voted "yea" on both rollcall vote 922 and rollcall vote 923.

IN MEMORY OF CPL GRAHAM  
McMAHON

**HON. DARLENE HOOLEY**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Ms. HOOLEY. Madam Speaker, these moments are important.

Let us remember and honor the life and sacrifice of Graham McMahon.

At times like these, I think long and hard about what matters most. Today, I took a moment to consider the meaning of his generosity—of his service.

Corporal McMahon spent a lot of time living in the valley between the forests. And yet today, it is we—I all of us—that stand in the shadow of his life.

Men like Graham are uncommon. Heroes—that's the term we use to describe men like him—but it is an incomplete term.

Graham understood the stakes; he was all too human and it is precisely because of his humanity—of his heart, his soul—that we are here tonight, grieving his loss.

Scripture tells us that, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

The lessons of the Gospel of John are just as true now, as they were then.

Corporal Graham McMahon woke up every day; put on his uniform and did what was needed. He did this out of love; he did this in an act of faith.

Graham had faith in us; he had faith that his country knew what it was doing when it sent him to serve across the seas. And he had faith in us to ensure that his sacrifice—and the sacrifice of his brothers and sisters in arms were remembered.

My friends, we live in challenging times; but we live free because of men, because of citizens—like Graham.

It is important for us all to remember that when Graham left for Iraq, he knew that he might not come home alive. But that did not stop him from performing his duty.

We must honor that memory by ensuring that we do ours. It is our duty to care for the military and the ones loved by them. It is our duty to ensure that we take good care of not merely the fallen, but the wounded struggling to return to the life they knew. And it is our duty to commit ourselves here, tonight, to making America the kind of place worthy of men such as CPL Graham McMahon.

His life casts a long shadow—a shadow that will endure through the years. Let us renew ourselves to celebrating that life and sustaining the community he loved.

#### FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 27, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3121) to restore the financial solvency of the national flood insurance program and to provide for such

program to make available multiperil coverage for damage resulting from windstorms and floods, and for other purposes:

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act which would put the National Flood Insurance Program, an important program to the residents of Rhode Island, back on solid footing. Devastated by the impact of Hurricane Katrina, the National Flood Insurance Program has operated in deficits for over 2 years. This bill authorizes increased funds for the program and includes additional provisions to improve flood plain mapping. Under this legislation, FEMA is required to conduct a review of U.S. flood maps and make the necessary changes to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness. We owe it to homeowners across the country to provide a fiscally sound insurance policy for natural disasters that create a flood crisis. In my district, the National Flood Insurance Program is essential to economic growth. My home state of Rhode Island saw a 15 percent increase in policy growth to the NFIP as many residents reside in coastal areas that would be threatened by a flood disaster. This bill can give homeowners in my district some peace of mind during storms and violent weather. Though questions remain over the cost of the optional wind coverage in the National Flood Insurance Program, I support the pending study by the General Accountability Office to investigate the financial viability of the wind program. I applaud Chairman FRANK, and congresswoman WATERS' efforts to infuse federal dollars back into the National Flood Insurance Program so that it continues to serve as a safety net for victims of future natural disasters. Congress has an obligation to ensure that this program is on sound financial footing and I urge my colleagues to pass this important piece of legislation.

#### CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTICELLO DAM

#### HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to bring your attention to Monticello Dam which is located at the very western border of California's Third Congressional District. This month marks the 50th anniversary of Monticello Dam, a part of the Federal Solano Project. The Solano Project is owned by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and is operated and maintained locally by the Solano County Water Agency. It serves a growing population of about 350,000 people and irrigated farm land of about 80,000 acres.

The beautiful Lake Berryessa was formed by Monticello Dam. Lake Berryessa is enjoyed year round for its recreational opportunities. Lower Putah Creek downstream of the dam provides a valuable fish and wildlife area and the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee, made up of Yolo and Solano representatives, is involved in creek restoration projects to enhance the natural setting.

Monticello Dam is an integral part of the Federal Solano Project and is an example of how the Bureau of Reclamation was able to achieve environmental protection, restore and

protect wildlife habitat, and at the same time provide much needed water for the people of this part of the state of California. It exemplifies how we can work responsibly to utilize the benefits of nature on behalf of all the people.

#### RECOGNIZING VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 696 IN OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

#### HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work the Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 696 in Owensboro, Kentucky, continue to do to improve their community. Post 696 has exemplified the mission of the VFW: "Honor the dead by helping the living."

The Post has donated over \$22,000 to local and State organizations in the past year. Beneficiaries of their generosity have included local schools, the Boy Scouts, shelters, and churches. Their generosity has also been extended to organizations such as the Wendell Foster Center, Shriners Hospitals, the Children's Wish Foundation, the Disabled American Veterans, and JEVCO.

Post 696 recently sponsored a going away picnic for the members of Ft. Campbell's Alpha Troop and their families being deployed to Iraq. The city of Owensboro adopted Alpha Troop through the Americans Supporting Americans' Adopt-a-Unit-Program. I thank the members of the troop for their service and the city of Owensboro for this commitment to these brave soldiers.

The VFW Post 696 Honor/Color Guard has been busy serving the community as well. Since 2001, they have participated in over 400 Veteran funerals and 50 community events in Daviess County.

I want to recognize the leaders of Post 696, Commander Richard "Ike" Eisenmenger Jr., Ladies Auxiliary President Marilu Goodsell, and Color/Honor Guard Commander Joseph Hayden. They have worked tirelessly to serve veterans and improve their community.

It is my privilege to honor the members of VFW Post 696 today, before the entire United States House of Representatives, for their past service to our country and continued dedication to serving their community.

#### RECOGNIZING THE COMPLETION OF THE CHARLOTTE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM

#### HON. TIM MAHONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Charlotte High School on the completion of their new football stadium and to honor the Charlotte County community for their dedication to the rebuilding of Charlotte High School.

Charlotte County High School has been educating the students of Charlotte County since 1926. In the summer of 2004, Charlotte High School and its stadium were devastated

by Hurricane Charley. Since 2004 the Charlotte County community, including the Charlotte County School Board, Superintendent Dave Gayler, Principal Barney Duffy and many students and families have worked diligently to rebuild both their city and their high school.

On October 5, 2007 work on the new Charlotte High School football stadium will be officially complete, marking an important milestone in the rebuilding of both the school and the spirit of the community. On this day, the Charlotte High School football team will play their first game in the new stadium against Manatee High School.

The students, parents and teachers of Charlotte High School have already achieved a huge victory by rebuilding their stadium. As the Charlotte High School Tarpons take the field tomorrow, they will have with them the great fighting spirit of the entire Charlotte High School community.

On behalf of Florida's 16th Congressional District, I wish luck to Coach Binky Waldrop, the Charlotte High School football players and the entire Charlotte High School community as they fight for yet another victory in Charlotte High School Stadium.

#### A TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF BELLFLOWER

#### HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the city of Bellflower and ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating its residents on the city's 50th anniversary. I am proud to represent this unique city as part of my 34th Congressional District of California.

And while we honor 50 years of official incorporation, Bellflower's roots date back to 1784, when a Spanish leatherjacket soldier named Manuel Nieto received a 300,000-acre land grant on which to graze livestock. After Nieto passed away in 1804, his land was divided into five smaller ranchos that were distributed to his heirs in 1832. His daughter, Manuela Cota, received a 27,000-acre plot known as Rancho Los Cerritos. After several changes in ownership, the rancho was eventually purchased by Lewellyn Bixby during the 1860s. Bixby's brother, Jotham, who was selected to manage the ranch, divided the land into several sections, including a 4,000-acre area called Somerset Ranch. This is the land on which much of Bellflower as we now know it would eventually sit.

During the late 1800s, a settlement began to sprout up along the banks of the San Gabriel River, but the community remained small and the population numbered less than 100 through the early part of the 20th century. The completion of a Pacific Electric Railway line through Somerset Ranch in 1905, and the vision of founders Emil Firth and Frank E. Woodruff to subdivide large ranches into town-sized lots provided a catalyst for growth. By 1912, Bellflower's population numbered more than 1,200.

Bellflower remained a rural community for many years and became known for its dairy and poultry farming. Many Dutch, Portuguese, Hispanic and Japanese immigrants settled in



the area to take advantage of the community's thriving agriculture industry, and by the late 1940s, Bellflower's population boomed to more than 44,000. As the town's population continued to grow, the community began to consider incorporation. And on September 3, 1957, the proud community was granted a certificate of city incorporation and became California's 348th city.

Fifty years later, Bellflower has blossomed into a dynamic and diverse community of more than 77,000 people. The city has left its rural roots behind, and is now focused on attracting new, quality businesses to a community that houses more than 3,000 merchants. Bellflower also remains committed to community development and has several projects in the works that will help beautify an already attractive city, including the opening of Pirate Park—a pirate-themed play area—the restoration of the historic Pacific Electric Railway Depot and the development of the three-acre Palm Street Linear Park, which will feature bike and walking trails.

Bellflower will mark its 50th anniversary in mid-October with a week of exciting events, including its annual Liberty Day Parade, a fireworks show, a cow-milking contest and several concerts. I'm honored to recognize this historic milestone in this city's rich history.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Bellflower's first 50 years as this thriving community continues to live by its motto of "Growing Together" and works toward a prosperous future.

HONORING RICHARD J. MCCANN

**HON. PETER J. ROSKAM**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Richard "Dick" McCann for receiving the Distinguished Citizens Award from the Three Fires Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Dick first began his journey as a Cub Scout, where he quickly learned to love the adventure of the outdoors. A few years later, as a Boy Scout, Dick had the opportunity to attend the three-week-long National Jamboree in Anaheim, California. Through his experiences as a Boy Scout, Dick developed the perseverance that has helped him achieve so much as a business and community leader in later life.

Dick's strong moral grounding and commitment to hard work were instrumental as he set out to begin his career. With \$1,500 borrowed from family, friends and neighbors, Dick started a construction company in a one-car garage in Villa Park.

Under his visionary leadership, McCann Construction Specialties Company soon grew into McCann Industries, directly employing more than 150 individuals in my congressional district. Their economic activity indirectly supports the jobs of countless others. Dick McCann and McCann Industries are a prime example of the hard work and productivity that sets American businesses apart in the global marketplace.

As Dick's experience and industry expertise became apparent, he was tapped by his peers

to serve as a board member of the Underground Contractors Association and the Concrete Contractors Association of Greater Chicago, as well as President of the Associated Construction Distributors International and President of the Illinois Equipment Distributors.

Although Dick retired from McCann Industries several years ago, he has left an indelible mark on both the company and the construction industry at large, working to build a corporate culture of integrity that reflects his many years of involvement with the Boy Scouts. McCann Industries continues to set the standard for construction businesses.

In addition to his professional accolades, Dick serves an executive board member and sits on the facilities committee of the Three Fires Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He has devoted countless hours to planning the Council's new Cub Scout Adventure Camp and I am confident that this endeavor, like everything Dick has set his mind to, will be a tremendous success.

Madam Speaker and Distinguished Colleagues, Dick McCann, a remarkable individual, is being deservedly honored with the Distinguished Citizens Award. Please join me in honoring this outstanding achievement.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER CHASE PARRISH FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher Chase Parrish, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 260, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Christopher has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher Chase Parrish for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE ON THE SEPTEMBER 30, 2007, PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission I rise to introduce a resolution congratulating the Ukrainian people for the holding of free, fair

and transparent parliamentary elections on September 30, 2007. These elections were held in a peaceful manner consistent with Ukraine's democratic values, and in keeping with that nation's commitments as a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

While there were some shortcomings, these elections stand in contrast to the vast majority of elections that have taken place in the countries of the former Soviet Union over the course of the last 15 years. Tone Tingsgaard, the Special Coordinator of the short-term election observers for the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) and Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, stated that these elections were conducted "in a positive and professional manner." The OSCE-led IEOM's preliminary statement concluded that the elections confirmed an open and competitive environment for the conduct of the election process and that freedom of assembly and expression were respected. IEOM observers assessed the voting process as good or very good in 98 percent of the nearly 3,000 polling stations visited, notwithstanding some shortcomings, notably with respect to the quality of voter lists, and the vote count was assessed as good or very good in 94 percent of the IEOM reports.

These pre-term elections did not come about easily, coming on the heels of a political crisis that engulfed Ukraine's president, prime minister, and parliament for several months earlier this year. These political disputes were rooted in weak constitutional delineations of the powers of the president and prime minister. After weeks of tense standoff, however, agreement was reached on May 27 stipulating new parliamentary elections for September 30. Now that the elections have concluded, it is my hope that Ukraine's political leaders will form a government reflecting the will of the Ukrainian people as expressed by the results of the elections; a government that advances political stability and democratic development. It is my hope, too, that the new parliament and government will focus on the constitutional framework, especially the question of separation of powers, in order to avoid the political uncertainty that we witnessed earlier this year. Ukraine also needs to further undertake the hard work of strengthening the rule of law, including an independent judiciary, and fighting corruption.

Madam Speaker, the conduct of these elections is a testament to the Ukrainian people's determined path towards the consolidation of democracy as Ukraine advances its integration with the Euro-Atlantic community. As such, Ukraine serves as a model for the post-Soviet countries, all too many of which have unfortunately retreated to heavy-handed authoritarianism.

This House can pride itself on having been a staunch supporter of freedom, human rights and democracy in Ukraine for many years—even before the restoration of Ukraine's independence in 1991. As this resolution underscores, it is important to continue our efforts to the further development of a democratic system in Ukraine based on the rule of law, a free market economy, and consolidation of Ukraine's security and sovereignty. I urge my colleagues to support this timely resolution.



## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, due to the passing of my father, on Wednesday, October 3, 2007, and Thursday, October 4, 2007, I missed rollcall vote Nos. 932 through 948. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on the motion on ordering the previous question on the rule H. Res. 701; "aye" on the motion on ordering the previous question on the rule H. Res. 702; "aye" on H. Res. 702; "aye" on the Conyers amendment to H.R. 928; "nay" on the motion to recommit H.R. 928; "aye" on H.R. 928; "aye" on the motion to postpone the vote to override the president's veto of the children's health care bill; "nay" on the motion to recommit H.R. 2740; "aye" on H.R. 2740; "aye" on the motion on ordering the previous question on the rule H. Res. 704; "aye" on the rule H. Res. 704; "aye" on the motion on ordering the previous question on the rule H. Res. 703; "aye" on the rule H. Res. 703; "nay" on the motion to recommit H.R. 3246; "aye" on H.R. 3246; "nay" on motion to recommit H.R. 3648; and "aye" on H.R. 3648.

RECOGNIZING MELISSA HENSLEY  
FOR ACHIEVING THE MISSOURI  
AMERICAN STAR OF TEACHING

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Melissa Hensley, of Milan, MO. Melissa Hensley is the recipient of the Missouri American Star of Teaching Award.

Melissa serves as a Literary Coach for Milan C-2 Elementary in Milan, MO. She works closely with other educational professionals and parents to increase students' reading abilities. Melissa also acts as a mentor to beginner teachers and represented Missouri schools by presenting at the National Reading First Conference in Reno, NV. Currently, she is working on completing her master's degree in Reading.

Each year, American Stars of Teaching receives over 4,000 nominations for this award. From this, the organization picks one educator from each state. This year, Melissa represented Missouri by earning the American Star of Teaching Award.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in honoring Melissa Hensley whose dedication and service to the people of Milan has been truly exceptional.

## HONORING BURCHELL NURSERY

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Burchell Nursery upon celebrating their 65th anniversary in the nursery business.

Irvin Burchell began his small business with an acre and a half in central California, just outside of Modesto, in 1942. Mr. Burchell's idea was "Plant good trees on good land, take care of them, and they will take care of you." Three generations later the company has grown to more than 1,000 acres, from 10,000 trees to 2.5 million. Burchell Nursery began with just peach trees. Today they grow peach, nectarine, cherry, apricot, plum, prune, apple, pomegranate, pistachio, citrus, almond, and walnut trees in more than 200 varieties.

Irvin Burchell's focus on quality led to the development of the state of California's own tree certification program. The Nursery began in the 1960s and has worked toward eliminating viruses from commercial tree varieties and establishing clean sources of bud wood. They have created an ongoing sampling process to ensure virus-free trees. This has become the model that is used by the state today.

Burchell Nursery changed hands in 1970 to Bill Burchell, who oversaw dramatic growth in the company. Through out the decade 700 acres were added in Oakdale, CA, and during the 1980s another branch was opened in Fresno, CA.

Now in the third generation, Burchell Nursery is headed by Tom Burchell. Tom has renewed the company's focus on research. Tom has pioneered the development of the nursery's container tree lines. With special growing techniques, and a uniquely designed container, the program has expanded from about 8,000 container trees per year to more than 170,000 in 2006. The breeding program has also flourished under Tom, with more than 40 patented varieties to the nursery's credit.

Burchell Nursery has been a constant leader in the community and in the state of California. To the state, Burchell Nursery has provided innovative ways of growing, nurturing and protecting trees from a number of viruses. In the local community, they have not only provided employment, but they have also given back in the form of donations and support to various groups. Burchell Nursery has always been a strong supporter of 4-H and Future Farmers of America. They have provided scholarships to outstanding agriculture students at Modesto Junior College and contributed trees to the orchards of elementary and secondary schools. They have also been active supporters of the agriculture research programs at Modesto Junior College, California State University at Fresno, University of California at Davis and have provided financial support to the Stanislaus County Agriculture Center.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Burchell Nursery on 65 years of business. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Burchell Nursery many years of continued success.

THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE ASSASSINATION OF ANNA  
POLITKOVSKAYA

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission,

I have followed closely the difficulties faced by journalists throughout the nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Many of these dedicated men and women risk financial ruin, physical intimidation and even death at the hands of those who fear honesty and truth in print or in the electronic media.

In this connection, I would call the attention of my distinguished colleagues to a tragic anniversary: Sunday, October 7th, 2007, marks the one-year anniversary of the death of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was shot and killed by an unknown assailant or assailants at the entrance to her apartment building in Moscow.

Ms. Politkovskaya was a brave and prolific journalist whose name has become synonymous with journalistic courage under fire. Her vivid, on-the-spot reporting brought to the world's attention the bloody war in Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya and the suffering of its victims, both Chechen and Russian. In her book "The Dirty War," a compilation of articles she had written previously on the conflict, she demonstrated a unique gift for telling the stories of people caught in the crossfire between the Russian military forces, brutal Chechen paramilitaries operating on Moscow's behalf, the indigenous Chechen resistance, and Islamic extremists who rushed in from all over the world to exploit the conflict. One reviewer wrote that "her writing focuses on the ethics of everyday life and individual misery in the midst of Chechnya's catastrophe. It is Chechen civilians and Russian conscript soldiers who are the centers of concern here. Politkovskaya's most withering scorn is reserved for the political and military classes that initiated this war, together with its profiteers, opportunists, and contract soldiers straight from Russia's prisons."

For her hard-hitting and courageous reporting Ms. Politkovskaya earned numerous journalism awards, including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual Prize for Journalism and Democracy in 2003. In 2004, she shared the Olof Palme Prize for human rights work with fellow Russian human rights activists Ludmila Alexeyeva and Sergei Kovalev.

On the day Anna Politkovskaya was killed, she was due to file a story on the looted reconstruction money intended for Chechnya, and use of torture and kidnapping by pro-Moscow Chechen paramilitaries. Clearly, her reporting had made a lot of enemies and threatened a lot of comfortable positions.

Anna Politkovskaya was an American citizen, born during the Cold War in New York City, where she was exposed to democracy, a free press, and a world of ideas denied to most Soviet citizens. Graduating in 1980 from Moscow State University, she worked for the Soviet newspaper Izvestiya during the halcyon days of perestroika. In 1999, she joined the staff of Novaya Gazeta, one of the few national Russian newspapers at that time that took a critical line toward the Russian government. Her dedication to exposing the tragic events in Chechnya resulted in around 50 trips to that cauldron of conflict.

In 2004, she made an attempt to travel to Beslan during the murderous school siege, in that village but fell ill with food poisoning on the way, an event which some took as a deliberate poison attempt by her enemies to kill her. She was very aware that her actions angered many in the governments of both

Chechnya and Russia, but never let threats to her life dissuade her from her passion. She was once quoted as saying, "journalists have a duty to report on the subject that matters, just as singers have to sing and doctors have to heal."

Despite her critical attitude toward her country's political leadership, Anna Politkovskaya possessed a deep warmth and love for its people. She cared for Russia, and wanted nothing else for the country and its people than to see it become a true democracy free from corruption and fear. Her death, said former Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev, "... is a savage crime against a professional and serious journalist and a courageous woman. It is a blow to the entire democratic, independent press. It is a grave crime against the country, against all of us."

Madam Speaker, the Russian government has announced the arrest of several persons implicated in Anna Politkovskaya's murder, and the actual shooter has reportedly been determined. However, the investigation itself appears to have raised more questions than answers, which is, unfortunately, a characteristic of many high-profile investigations in Russia nowadays. Let us hope that the investigation will be brought to a successful conclusion, and that Anna Politkovskaya's killers, who or wherever they are, will be brought to justice.

#### HONORING COACH BOB ROMBACH RETIREMENT

#### HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Duncanville High School Panther Baseball Coach Bob Rombach for 39 years of dedicated coaching and teaching.

After graduating from Denton High School in 1961, Coach Rombach signed a professional baseball contract with the Houston Colt 45's organization. He spent the off-seasons studying for his Bachelor's Degree and graduated in 1968 from North Texas State University.

His first coaching position was in Amarillo. Since then he has led five different baseball programs and is recognized as one of the most successful and respected coaches in Texas High School Baseball. Coach Rombach's accolades are not only numerous but prestigious as well. He has been named Texas Coach of the Year twice, received a number of district honors and was coach of the North-South All-Star Game. In November of 1990, Coach Rombach was elected into the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame after guiding the Panthers to the Class 5A State Championship. In 2000, he was selected by the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association for the Hall of Fame.

As coach of the Duncanville Panthers, Coach Rombach's teams have reached the playoffs 22 times in 23 seasons. They have earned a trip to the Texas State Tournament in Austin six times and won the state title in 1990. His career record is 859 wins and 362 losses and his record at Duncanville High School is 565 wins with 180 losses. During his distinguished tenure at Duncanville, Coach Rombach has seen thirty of his players drafted with nine playing in the big leagues.

Coach Rombach and his wife, Deanna, have three children: daughters, Amy and Tracy and son, Deron, who is a national cross checker for the Baltimore Orioles. They have seven grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, in closing I would like to commend and congratulate Coach Bob Rombach on all of his accomplishments. His dedication and commitment to coaching and teaching is worthy of recognition. I wish Coach Rombach a happy and healthy retirement and it is an honor to represent him in the 24th District of Texas.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3648, MORTGAGE FOR- GIVENESS DEBT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

#### HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a co-sponsor to this bill that will provide relief to those people in my district, the entire State of Florida, and the country as a whole who are losing their homes.

Foreclosures in south Florida are escalating way too quickly. They have tripled in Miami-Dade County and more than doubled in Broward County from this time last year. In fact, Florida as a whole is second only to Nevada in new foreclosures from January through March of this year.

Why this fast increase in foreclosures? Mostly because lenders gave high-priced loans to borrowers during the housing boom, particularly borrowers in low-income, largely minority neighborhoods. Starting in 2000, because property values were rising quickly, financial institutions made risky loans that put them and the borrowers in jeopardy. About \$1.3 trillion in subprime loans was lent to these borrowers. Specifically to south Florida, in Miami-Dade, about 23 percent of these loans are subprime—in Broward about 18 percent are subprime—in Miami Gardens about 66 percent are subprime.

Florida homeowners are now bearing about one tenth of that 1.3 trillion dollar debt. This is more than any other state except California. Now the value of these homes is declining but these homeowners have this huge outstanding mortgage debt. It's bad enough that these homeowners are losing their homes, but under current law they would also have to include their discharged mortgage debt in their income and pay tax on it.

This bill will give some relief to those homeowners by eliminating that tax. Equally important, the bill will help those homeowners who are doing their best to avoid foreclosures—those that are having a portion of their mortgage discharged as part of a restructuring of their debt.

It is time for those homeowners in Florida and elsewhere to get this badly needed tax relief.

#### MEJA EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

#### HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2740) to require accountability for contractors and contract personnel under Federal contracts, and for other purposes:

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I have followed with interest news reports from Iraq documenting some of the terrible atrocities that have been committed at the hands of military contractors hired by the United States. I have been keenly interested in the recent congressional hearings that have been held on this matter. Based on what I have learned, I am pleased today that the House of Representatives is considering this bill, which would ensure that those who do business with the United States Government in Iraq can be held accountable when they commit criminal acts. Unfortunately, I cannot be present for the vote today, but I wanted to ensure I submitted this statement of support so the record will reflect that I am strongly in favor of the goals of this important bill.

This bill is a fair and sensible way to ensure that military contractors can be prosecuted for their criminal actions in a U.S. court. This is important both because it gives the government a way to police the behavior of these contractors, and also because it shows the Iraqi people that the United States is serious about the rule of law. While I am glad Congress is taking this action now, I remain concerned about the Bush Administration's failure to take steps to investigate or prosecute those who committed wrongdoing in the past. I believe Congress should continue to investigate these incidents and ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

#### TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR FRANK D. GROSS

#### HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, let me take this moment to recognize the extensive career of Command Sergeant Major Frank D. Gross. CSM Gross has spent over 41 years serving in the Missouri Army National Guard and Engineer Regiment.

Frank Gross earned a master's degree in education from Central Missouri State University. In 2001, he successfully completed the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. During his career, CSM Gross has been awarded over 18 medals and ribbons for his selfless leadership and dedication. He is highly respected by his peers, as well as by the soldiers who he has led.

CSM Gross's service to our country in wartime has been invaluable. Beginning in 2002, Gross served as CSM for the 35th Engineer Brigade for over 2 years, where he supervised the deployment of three battalions and two

companies. Due to CSM Gross's exceptional guidance, these units effectively completed the missions to which they were assigned.

Currently, CSM Gross is the Missouri State Command Sergeant Major for the Joint Force Headquarters. In this capacity, he is responsible for the enlisted soldiers' promotion system, as well as training other CSMs. I'm certain that Members of the House will join me in honoring Command Sergeant Major Gross for his outstanding service to our country.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 3246 REGIONAL ECO-  
NOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 4, 2007*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3246, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007. I would like to thank my colleague, Representative OBERSTAR, for introducing this important legislation, as well as for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation creates a comprehensive regional approach to economic and infrastructure development in some of the most severely economically distressed regions of our nation, authorizing \$1.25 billion through Fiscal Year 2012 for two existing commissions and three new regional economic development commissions. It authorizes these five regional economic development commissions under a common framework of administration, providing a rubric for economic development planning.

All five regional commissions will employ the model of the highly successful Appalachian Regional Commission, crafted in the 1960s to address persistent poverty in the Appalachian region. The Appalachian Regional Commission, through the several hundred projects it funds annually, has created thousands of new jobs, as well as improving local water and sewer systems, increasing school readiness, expanding access to health care, assisting local communities with strategic planning, and providing help and resources for new businesses. Crucially, this model combines targeting communities with greatest need with a unified framework of management and decision-making.

Two of the five regional commissions authorized by today's legislation, the Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, are existing entities that will be reauthorized by this legislation. The first of these, the Delta Regional Commission, was proposed by President Clinton in 1998, and is designed to strengthen the economic development of the chronically impoverished lower Mississippi River area. Included in this region are counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

In addition to systemic poverty and underdevelopment, this region is particularly in need of support after the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Hurricane Katrina resulted in more than 1,800 deaths, nearly 500,000 homes in Louisiana and Mississippi being de-

stroyed or made uninhabitable, and about 1.5 million people being at least temporarily displaced from their homes. From housing to health care to education, the region remains in a state of crisis. Though this Congress has directed more than \$6.4 billion in assistance to the victims of this disaster, we still have a great deal of work to do to rebuild these devastated communities.

Other regions will also greatly benefit from this legislation. The Northern Great Plains Regional Commission encompasses all counties in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as certain counties in Missouri. The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission consists of all counties in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida that are not served by the Appalachian Regional Commission or Delta Regional Commission. The Southwest Border Regional Commission covers certain counties in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The Northern Border Regional Commission includes specified counties in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

For each of these commissions, this legislation establishes membership, voting structure, and staffing, as well as outlining conditions for financial assistance, authorizing grants to local development districts, and establishing an Inspector General for the commissions. It also includes additional provisions designed to produce a standard administrative framework. By providing a uniform set of procedures, this bill creates a consistent method for distributing economic development funds throughout the regions most in need of such assistance and ensures a comprehensive regional approach to economic and infrastructure development in the most severely distressed regions in the country.

H.R. 3246 authorizes the appropriation of \$1.25 billion from 2008–2012 to establish these development commissions. It also directs the five regional commissions to award grants to state and local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofit organizations to promote economic and infrastructure development. At least 40 percent of the authorized funds will be directed to grants to develop transportation, telecommunications, and other basic public infrastructure. Remaining funds will be used for other economic development activities, such as providing job training, improving public services, and promoting conservation, tourism, and development of renewable and alternative energy projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Appalachian Regional Commission has had great success bringing about economic revitalization and improving the lives of many residents of the region. I believe that this legislation can make significant strides toward bringing similar development to five more regions of our nation. These commissions will stimulate struggling economies, and they will help strengthen communities by providing education and job training and supporting local entrepreneurship and leadership.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues, in the future, to work to extend coordinated economic development projects to some of our nation's urban areas. Many inner city areas of our country suffer from a level of economic distress similar to that felt by residents of the regions addressed by this bill, and I believe that we can do a great deal to assist the economic development of these urban areas as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is extremely important legislation that will go a long way toward improving the quality of life for significant numbers of Americans. It will create prospects for the future and strengthen communities. I believe this is extremely important legislation for our nation, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

ETHIOPIA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF  
2007

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 5, 2007*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, in the Ogaden region, the Ethiopian Government is fighting an insurgency but has carried the war to the innocent population. The Ethiopian Government has put the region under effective commercial blockade, prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching the suffering population, and expelled humanitarian NGOs. We have reports that troops have also raped women, burned villages, and confiscated livestock on a large scale.

In Somalia we have reports that the Ethiopian army has raped and pillaged. Of course brutality is not limited to the Ethiopian army. It is rampant in the Ogaden and Somalia, where insurgents, warring clans, and terrorists all intentionally inflict misery on the land. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has reported that nearly 500,000 people, almost one third of Mogadishu's population, have fled in recent months as conditions in the city have deteriorated.

But the United States Government is the staunchest international supporter of the Ethiopian Government of Prime Minister Meles. Our government supplies Meles with over \$100 million in aid every year, much of it military. We cannot do this and pretend that we don't share responsibility for the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Meles regime. We cannot do this and criticize China for supporting the barbarous Sudanese regime of Omar al-Bashir.

We all know that the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and in Somalia is extremely complicated. Yet the moral imperative is not complicated. A good end cannot be justified by a bad means.

While we want to deny jihadist terrorists any "platform" in the Horn of Africa, we must not protect ourselves—and our Allies—from terrorists by enabling the Ethiopian government to visit terror on the Ogaden region or Somalia. We can only work with the Meles government if we do everything possible to change its behavior.

This means we have to be willing to do more than "dialogue" with President Meles. We have to be willing to withdraw aid if his government does not dramatically improve its human rights record.

That is why I supported the Ethiopia Human Rights Act, H.R. 2003, which passed the House on October 2, 2007. This bill will withdraw certain forms of aid to the Ethiopian Government, including forms of military aid, if it does not meet certain human rights benchmarks, spelled out in the legislation.

The reports from the Ogaden and Somalia are the latest in a long series of human rights outrages. In August 2005 I visited Ethiopia

and met with some of those opposition figures imprisoned by Prime Minister Meles, including Hailu Shawel, the Chairman of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, the largest democratic opposition party.

I also met with Meles. I brought up the June 2005 slaughter of almost 200 prodemocracy demonstrators in Addis, and the mass arrests that followed. I urged him to investigate that atrocity, to punish those responsible, and to release political prisoners. Meles told me, "I have a file on all of them, they are all guilty of treason."

We should all be skeptical of the value of dialogue on human rights reform with a man who would make a comment like that.

I believe that our government has not pushed Prime Minister Meles hard enough on human rights issues because it is satisfied that his government is cooperating with us in the war on terror. The war on terror is very, very important; but no regime that terrorizes people can be a reliable ally in the war on terror. Terrorism isn't just a military issue, it's also a human rights issue. Terrorists come from countries where governments failed to respect

their human rights. In promoting human rights in Ethiopia, we are attacking terrorism at its roots.

America's commitment to promote respect for human rights around the world demands that we prevail upon Prime Minister Meles to respect human rights. I call upon our government to withdraw forms of aid and support to the Meles government to release its remaining political prisoners, to spare civilians in its counterinsurgency operations, and to permit humanitarian aid in the Ogaden.